

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

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TAGS: PFOR, VS

SUBJECT: SENATOR KENNEDY'S PRESS RELEASE

FOR AMBASSADOR

HEREWITH FYI THE TEXT OF APRIL 1 RELEASE BY SENATOR KENNEDY'S OFFICE CONCERNING EXCHANGE OF CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE SECRETARY ON INDOCHINA:

BEGIN TEXT: SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY, CHAIRMAN OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON REFUGEES, TODAY RELEASED AN EXCHANGE OF CORRESPONDENCE WITH SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY A. KISSINGER REGARDING UNITED STATES POLICY, INVOLVEMENT AND FUTURE PLANNING TOWARDS INDOCHINA.

IN RELEASING THE CORRESPONDENCE, SENATOR KENNEDY SAID: "THE SECRETARY'S LETTER IS A WELCOME BUT DISTURBING CLARIFICATION OF OUR PRESENT POLICY IN INDOCHINA. I AM DISTRESSED THAT THE SECRETARY'S STATEMENT SEEMS TO PROPOUND A NEW
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RATIONALIZATION FOR OUR CONTINUED HEAVY INVOLVEMENT IN INDO-

CHINA. APPARENTLY -- THE ADMINISTRATION NOW VIEWS THE PARIS AGREEMENT ON ENDING THE WAR AND RESTORING THE PEACE AS CREATING NEW AMERICAN COMMITMENTS TO SOUTH VIETNAM. FROM PRESUMED COMMITMENTS UNDER THE SEATO TREATY, THE GULF OF TONKIN RESOLUTION, AND THE PRESIDENT'S POWER TO PROTECT OUR TROOPS, WE HAVE NOW MOVED TO 'COMMITMENTS' UNDER THE

PARIS AGREEMENT -- WHICH WAS NOT SUBMITTED TO THE SENATE AS A TREATY.

"THIS SHATTERS THE HOPE OF MOST AMERICANS THAT THE PARIS AGREEMENT -- AND THE RETURN OF OUR SERVICEMEN AND PRISONERS OF WAR -- FINALLY SIGNED THE END TO AMERICA'S HEAVY INVOLVEMENT IN INDOCHINA. IT SHATTERS THE HOPE THAT WE COULD FINALLY DISENGAGE FROM OUR DIRECT AND OFTEN MANIPULATIVE INVOLVEMENT IN THE REMAINING POLITICAL AND MILITARY CONFRONTATIONS OF THE AREA, AND FINALLY END OUR MASTER-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM. AND RATHER THAN CHART A NEW BEGINNING, THE ADMINISTRATION'S INTERPRETATION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT IS PERPETUATING OLD RELATIONSHIPS AND CONTINUING OLD POLICIES -- AS IF NOTHING HAD CHANGED.

"THE ADMINISTRATION'S COMMITMENTS IN INDOCHINA ARE COSTING THE AMERICAN TAXPAYER SOME DOLS 3 BILLION THIS YEAR. IN LIGHT OF PRESSING NEEDS AND INFLATION AT HOME, AND OTHER URGENT PRIORITIES OVERSEAS, THE ADMINISTRATION'S COURSE IN INDOCHINA BORDERS ON FISCAL IRRESPONSIBILITY, AND IS CONTRARY TO THE NEW DIRECTIONS SET BY CONGRESS LAST YEAR."

AMONG OTHER THINGS, SECRETARY KISSINGER'S LETTER MAKES THESE POINTS:

(1) THE TWO "BASIC THEMES" IN UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARD INDOCHINA ARE FIRST, THAT "A SECURE PEACE IN INDOCHINA IS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN OUR EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A WORLDWIDE STRUCTURE OF PEACE," AND SECOND, THAT "FORCIBLE CONQUEST" IN INDOCHINA BY NORTH VIETNAM WOULD HAVE "SERIOUS DESTABILIZING EFFECTS WHICH ARE NOT LIMITED TO THE AREA UNDER IMMEDIATE THREAT."

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(2) "LAOS IS THE BRIGHT SPOT IN INDOCHINA..."

(3) "THE UNITED STATES HAS NO BILATERAL WRITTEN COMMITMENT TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM." HOWEVER, UNDER THE PARIS AGREEMENT "THE UNITED STATES COMMITTED ITSELF TO STRENGTHENING THE CONDITIONS WHICH MADE THE CEASE-FIRE POSSIBLE AND TO THE GOAL OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE

PEOPLE-S RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION. WITH THESE COMMITMENTS IN MIND, WE CONTINUE TO PROVIDE TO THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM THE MEANS NECESSARY FOR ITS SELF-DEFENSE AND FOR ITS ECONOMIC STABILITY ... WE HAVE THUS COMMITTED OURSELVES VERY SUBSTANTIALY..."

(4) EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH A WORLD BANK CONSORTIUM FOR

RECONSTRUCTION PURPOSES IN INDOCHINA ARE STALLED BECAUSE OF "THE REACTIONS OF PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES TO THE ENERGY CRISIS AND TO THE CONGRESSIONAL DECISION ON IDA REPLENISHMENT... A REVERSAL OF THE NEGATIVE CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON IDA REPLENISHMENT WOULD CLEARLY ENHANCE THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCCESS" IN ESTABLISHING THE CONSORTIUM.

(5) ON HUMANITARIAN RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE TO ORPHANS, REFUGEES AND OTHER WAR VICTIMS, UNITED STATES CONTRIBUTIONS TOTAL SOME DOLS 111.4 MILLION FOR FY 1974. ADDIIONALLY, "UNICEF HAS RECENTLY COMPLETED ITS STUDY OF THE PROBLEMS IN THE INDOCHINA COUNTRIES AND HAS JUST SUBMITTED ITS PROPOSED PROGRAM TO POSSIBLE DONOR COUNTRIES."

(6) "SHOULD HANOI TURN AWAY FROM A MILITARY SOLUTION AND DEMONSTRATE A SERIOUS COMPLIANCE WITH THE AGREEMENT, THEN WE WOULD BE PREPARED, WITH THE APPROVAL OF CONGRESS, TO PROCEED WITH OUR UNDERTAKING REGARDING RECONSTRUCTION ASSISTANCE TO NORTH VIETNAM." WASHINGTON-HANOI TALKS ON THIS ISSUE WERE SUSPENDED LAST JULY.

(7) THE VIETNAM CEASEFIRE "IS FAR FROM SCRUPULOUSLY OBSERVED. THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM IS THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ARE STILL DETERMINED TO SEIZE POLITICAL POWER IN THE SOUTH, USING MILITARY MEANS IF NECESSARY.... IN PARTI-
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CULARLY FLAGRANT VIOLATION OF THE AGREEMENT, NORTH VIETNAM HAS PERSISTED IN ITS INFILTRATION OF MEN AND MATERIEL INTO THE SOUTH, BRINGING IN MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND TROOPS AND LARGE QUANTITIES OF HEAVY EQUIPMENT SINCE THE CEASEFIRE BEGAN."

(8) NEVERTHELESS, THE PARIS AGREEMENT "CONTINUES TO PROVIDE A WORKABLE FRAMEWORK FOR PEACE."

(9) "SERIOUS MILITARY PROBLEMS REMAIN (IN CAMBODIA), AND CONTINUED HARD FIGHTING DURING THE NEXT FEW MONTHS IS EXPECTED...." UNITED STATES RELATIONS WITH CAMBODIA "DO NOT STEM FROM A FORMAL COMMITMENT BUT ARE BASED ON OUR OWN NATIONAL INTERESTS."

(10) WHILE IT WOULD "NOT BE USEFUL TO PROVIDE DETAILS" OF RECENT DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES REGARDING INDOCHINA, "WE CAN ASSURE THE CONGRESS THAT WE HAVE USED EVERY MEANS AT OUR DISPOSAL TO ENCOURAGE A REDUCTION IN THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE AND AN ORDERLY RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT."

THE EXCHANGE OF CORRESPONDENCE IS ATTACHED. END TEXT. RUSH

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